



Local Man Invents New Toy

Page 7

Happy 50th birthday



Photo: Kat Wade

Graduating Laurel Hill Nursery School student Lily Nichols, 4, plays on the gym during the 50th Anniversary Alumni celebration held April 27 at the school, which is located at 401 Euclid St. City Mayor Willie

Brown, whose children graduated from the school in the late 1960s, attended the festivities and signed autographs for children.

Rats 'big as cats' infest city parking lot in Inner Richmond

by Vincent Pearson

Lawmakers and neighborhood activists have been struggling for years to find a healthy balance between Clement Street's bustling commerce and the litter and traffic congestion which often accompanies it.

While many people agree Clement Street is looking considerably better than it did three years ago, in large part because of new legislation passed to control problems associated with the street's large number of produce stores, a noticeable increase in the area's rat population suggests that, on balance, the current situation is somewhat less than healthy.

A series of complaints were registered with the Environmental Health Department last month reporting oversized rats streaming in and out of a public parking lot located at Clement Street and Eighth Avenue.

When inspectors from the City's Bureau of Environmental Health investigated, they found the parking lot covered with rat droppings and swarming with

flies. "It's one of the worse cases I've seen," says Johnston Ojo, the principle health inspector for District 2.

Upon closer inspection, the inspectors found a number of large rat holes in the soil next to parking meters and gnaw marks in the fence which separates the parking lot from the dumpster area of several Clement St. restaurants and markets.

The City's Bureau of Environmental Health issued the department of parking and traffic a notice April 15 to clean up the lot and issued a \$180 citation.

The parking department has since hired Western Exterminators to fight the dirty rats. The exterminators baited the holes with large black traps and are monitoring the site for improvement.

According to Ron Szeto, the deputy director with the SF Parking and Traffic Department, the janitor at the lot reports there seem to be fewer rats.

But Szeto bristles when it is suggested that his department is neglecting the lot's upkeep. "The janitor is doing a fine job," he

says.

"It's not because the lot is dirty. It's not because the street is dirty. It's just near an obvious food source."

An exterminator from Western, who did not want to be identified, agreed with Szeto. "The parking lot doesn't have much to do with it. It has to do with the merchants and their upkeep

habits. They're not storing trash properly and the rats are living off the garbage from the backs of the stores."

While many citizens and government officials are blaming the merchants' negligence, at least some merchants say they need help. Luisa Rosales, the bookkeeper at the Clement Market, says her grocery is doing all it

can to control the rats.

"We do everything that's possible. We put out traps and have pest control come every two weeks. But we still have rats as big as cats. And it's getting worse."

Rosales says that its not uncommon to see as many as 10

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Traffic lights nixed for Balboa St.

Winter storms cause 50 runoffs at Baker Beach

by Dwight King-Leatham

Following an intense letter-writing campaign from Richmond District merchants and neighborhood residents, the City has dropped plans for five Balboa Street stoplights between Arguello and Park Presidio boulevards and four along Golden Gate Avenue between Masonic Avenue and Divisadero Street.

"There was no expression of support," said SF Department of Parking and Traffic's Ricardo Olea.

Instead the DPT's focus has turned to expected detours if the city and state ever agree on ways to fix the earthquake-damaged endpoints of the Central Freeway.

Traffic engineer Peter Woo told a Planning Association for the Richmond audience April 25

about DPT's latest detour plans if Central Freeway work begins. At the meeting local residents also heard about efforts to stop multiple sewage overflows from occurring at Baker Beach.

Commenting on the controversial traffic-hastening lights along Balboa and Golden Gate, Woo said they were nixed as unneeded and too costly by the state Department of Transportation. As well, they were too far from the damaged Oak Street on ramp and the Fell Street off-ramp to help much.

Olea said the stop light proposal was to replace four-way stop signs with lights to address concerns over possible street congestion. DPT studies say one-fourth of exiting freeway drivers from the Fell Street off ramp head for the Richmond or Sunset

Continued on page 8

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Private school gives up Richmond site, moving to Haight Ashbury

Lycee Francais International, a private-school fixture in the Outer Richmond District, is moving to a new location it purchased in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood.

Located at 3301 Balboa St. at 34th Avenue, the school serves students from preschool age through high school.

The school's preschool, formerly located at a separate site on 28th Avenue near Cabrillo Street, is also moving to the Haight so the school can have consolidated operations. A new preschool operation has taken over the 28th Avenue site.

Groundbreaking at the new site was on April 27. The new lo-



Photo: Philip Libono Gang

The site of the Lycee Francais school at 3301 Balboa St. is now for sale.

cation, at 755 Ashbury St., will house the school's 600 students.

"We look forward to our move into this new building, which will both reflect and support the level of academic excellence provided by the educational environment

of the Lycee," said Ghislaine Hudson, principal of the international school.

Rehabilitating the Ashbury Street location for the educational institution is the Fine Line Group, Inc., which is known in local construction circles for its "fast track" projects.

The San Francisco school intends to open at its new location for the start of the new school year Sept. 3.

Lycee Francais is part of a worldwide network of approximately 500 French schools.

The four-story Balboa Street site, with play areas located on the roof, is currently being offered for sale.

Morning tribute at China Beach for popular Outer Richmond resident

by Valerie May

A group of people gathered at 9 a.m. on an unseasonably warm morning at China Beach on Sunday, April 28, to pay respects to neighborhood resident Joe Murphy, who passed away April 21.

Joe Murphy — sometimes known as John — died at UC Hospital of several causes, including brain hemorrhage and heart failure, at the age of 49. He had been hospitalized there since April 12.

Murphy was known as a fixture around such California Street neighborhood anchors as the magazine store World News, and cafes Angelina's and The Troubadour — where he would sometimes serve as unofficial

doorman during parties.

At the informal memorial, one of Murphy's friends held a sign with a photograph of Murphy and the words "Goodbye Joe." Another passed out small candy bars with a label bearing a picture of angels floating over the Golden Gate Bridge and the words "Chocolate Heaven," and several passed out cards which read "Joe on the Go" — a reference to Murphy's enthusiastic approach to life.

Some of the group of about 18 mourners, standing in a circle on the beach with a view that takes in the Marin Headlands and the Golden Gate Bridge, took turns — some tearfully — remembering Murphy and how he touched their lives.

To Julia Scott-Jackson, who



Courtesy photo

Joe Murphy

was his girlfriend, he was "a wonderful person."

"I'll remember him as the kindest, most loving person — totally non-judgemental and accepting of people," she said.

Murphy was "a real gentleman" who was "compassionate, never said anything bad about anyone," she said.

To Ron Matinot, he was "one guy in 1,000, extremely honest, non-judgemental, and extremely shy."

"He was, in a lot of ways, the woff and warp of the neighborhood," he said.

To Hisham Barkouki, he was "the most genuinely nice guy."

Others who spoke of him cited his habit of rising with the sun and going running or swimming at China Beach every morning, his graciousness and gratitude for the company of others, his many problems, especially in the last three or four years, and the headway he seemed to be making in the last year of his life.

Murphy had had a clothing business and an auto leasing business in the City, and had travelled extensively in Asia, Scott-Jackson said.

"He had a lot of adventures," she said.

In the last few years, his life was troubled by a business reversal, bouts with alcoholism and worsening health problems: he was afflicted with seizures which compounded brain damage caused by a head injury, said Scott-Jackson.

But in his last year, friends say, Murphy had found a degree of happiness.

Scott-Jackson, who met Murphy a year ago at the #1 Muni bus stop on California Street.

She describes him as "one of those people who left a legacy and touched a lot of people in this neighborhood."

As one of the mourners said, "It's going to be real hard to have a barbecue without Joe."

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Bond measure to rebuild de Young deemed likely

by Dwight King-Leatham

A \$73 million bond measure for a new M.H. de Young Museum has a good chance of appearing on the November ballot — thanks to good friends in high places.

What may push the de Young project onto the ballot ahead of other city projects on the drawing board is backing from the mayor and SF Board of Supervisors.

A technical report issued last month by Chief Administrative Officer William Lee and city department heads ranked the de Young proposal sixth out of 30 bond projects using six factors, including commitment to the project by elected officials.

Lee and department heads sitting as the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee numerically scored projects as an aid to elected officials who must decide by June 12 which bond measures to put on the ballot.

Those decisions are important because of the possibility of overburdening the city's debt capacity and causing a change in the City's financial rating. If the City's bond rating is lowered, taxpayers would have to pay more in the way of additional interest payments to pay for the \$73 million loan.

Aside from evaluating the level of support from public officials, five other factors used to evaluate the project's importance were: how essential it is; its purpose; how many people it would affect; its economic impact and other available funding sources.

Staff close to the CIAC emphasized that policy decisions are made by elected officials. But it appears the de Young museum,

Controversial underground garage separated from plan

which the committee gave 13 out of 17 possible points, and a third-ranked project, a \$100 million affordable housing measure which got 14 out of 17, both have the best chance because they have the mayor's backing, according to John Whitehurst, the de Young's campaign manager for the bond measure.

Whitehurst said Brown, and six members of the board of supervisors have thrown their support solidly behind the general obligation bond measure and that Brown also wants to see affordable housing on the ballot.

In 1992 the SF Department of Public Works said the de Young and Asian Art Museum might collapse in a major earthquake.

Ranked ahead of the de Young in Lee's March 4 report were the \$100 million replacement for the SF jail in San Bruno, which got 15 of 17 possible points, the \$115 million new Youth Guidance Center which garnered 14 and the new Hall of Justice and a \$10 million "911" Emergency Communications Center building, which got 13 each.

"The mayor is very much in favor of the de Young bond issue and will get out in front of it in a highly public manner, whether it means providing a ballot argument, raising money or just lending a public voice to it," said Brown spokesman P.J. Johnson. "This is something the mayor is very much into."

City Supervisor Michael Yaki said his only question when asked to support the de Young project was whether bond money would help pay for the controver-

sial museum parking facility at Golden Gate Park. When told "No," Yaki said fine.

The museum's board of trustees have decided to raise up to \$44 million in private funds to pay for the proposed garage, choosing to keep the measure separate from the proposed bond measure.

Patrons driving to the de Young would enter the two-level underground garage by a tunnel from at 10th Avenue and Fulton Street.

"I believe the de Young should have a majestic home," Yaki says. "Last year we celebrated its 100th anniversary, and what is there now is rather makeshift compared to the building there originally. A brand new home for the de Young is part of a revitalization of Golden Gate Park. I'm looking forward to it."

Steve Nelson, Lee's chief of staff, said June 12 is the legal deadline for supervisors or the mayor to select how many proposals to put on the fall ballot. Whether all or only some of the highly ranked measures make the ballot will depend on how much Lee's office says San Francisco can borrow without hurting its financial standing with bond raters.

On April 22, the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee decided to wait to set a borrowing amount because not all of the proposed projects' bond reports were in.

The CIAC increased its potential for bond borrowing by raising the percentage of bond debt load to assessable city property ratio to 2.8 percent, up from 2.4

percent. The city's commercial bond raters told Lee and Laura Wagner-Lockwood, director of public finance, this increase would not change its "moderate" debt rating.

Wagner-Lockwood hopes to calculate the dollar amount of the extra borrowing capacity soon to help officials make the June 12 deadline.

A preview of her calculation is noted in Lee's March 4 report, which said using the old 2.4-percent limit would have meant the city could not have prudently borrowed more than \$30 million in bonds for its pending projects between now and the year 2000,

nor more than \$400 million after 2000. The report said the new 2.8 percent debt ceiling allows the city to borrow up to \$215 million before 2000 and \$635 million afterward.

If the de Young's financing were approved, demolition and construction would start in 1999 and last into 2003, and exhibition space would about double.

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POLICE BLOTTER

Battery With a Finger, April 19, 3 p.m., Geary Boulevard Between Arguello Boulevard and Presidio Avenue

The victim was riding in the rear of an eastbound No. 38 Muni bus. She asked four unknown juveniles to turn off their loud radio. They ignored her, so she went to the unknown suspect, the bus driver, for help. But within a few minutes, the radio was turned up again.

When the victim again told the juveniles to turn down the radio, one of them said, "It's none of your business, you fat b----." The juveniles feigned kicking the victim in the stomach area but made no contact.

The suspect stopped the bus at Geary Boulevard and Presidio Avenue and approached the victim. "Get the f--- off the bus," he told her, poking her right arm with an index finger. "You are the cause of the problem."

The victim saw the suspect's identification number and got off the bus, but did not catch the bus number.

Police could not reach Muni to identify the suspect.

Burglary, Hot Prowl, Forcible Entry, April 17, 11:30 a.m. to 11:50 a.m., 800 Block of Arguello Boulevard

When the victim returned to his flat at 11:50 a.m. after an errand, his front door was ajar and its glass was broken. Inside he shouted, "Who's there?"

One of the four suspects responded, "Go, leave or I'll shoot my gun." The victim ran outside and followed the suspects in his car as they fled south on Arguello Boulevard. The suspects entered an unknown Honda and two of them got off on Balboa Street and fled.

The victim flagged down police on the 500 block of Second Avenue. At Second and Balboa, police detained three possible

suspects who closely matched the descriptions of the burglary suspects, but the victim could not make a positive identification. At the time, these possible suspects were detained but not charged with the burglary.

Police found a crowbar at the victim's flat that may have been used to force open the iron gate of the building. The victim lost more than \$500 in cash from a dresser.

Possession of Narcotics for Sale, Ex-Felon in Possession of Firearm, April 18, 2:15 a.m., Blake Street at Geary Boulevard

Two officers in a marked patrol car stopped the suspect on Blake Street because his 1982 Chevrolet Blazer had a broken windshield, a violation of a vehicle code.

A computer check revealed that the suspect's driver's license was suspended or revoked and that the suspect had a criminal history that included drug and cellular phone violations.

Officers arrested the suspect and searched him, finding three papers and \$170 cash in his

Continued on page 5

Police Beat



Capt. Jerome DeFilippo

I apologize for not having my column finished in time for the last issue of the Richmond ReView. I have come to the conclusion that it is a lot easier to be a police captain than a newperson constantly faced with deadlines.

Once again the reported crime in the Richmond District has declined. The figures for the period ending March 31 show a reduction in the crime rate of 17.65 percent when compared to March 1995, and a reduction of 8.57 percent for the year to date. I know you will join me in congratulating the Richmond Station officers for their clear devotion to their duties.

On March 31, a senseless and tragic incident took the life of Jose DeJesus, a man employed by the New York Times as a courier in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. While on his normal rounds, he was accosted by two Asian youths driving a silver-gray Japanese vehicle in what is believed to have been a robbery attempt. During the course of that attempt, Mr. DeJesus was shot and killed. The investigation is ongoing and if anyone observed anything out of the ordinary on the evening of March 31 at approximately 11:45 p.m. in the area of the 200 block of 29th Avenue, please call Inspector Nick Klimenko of the Homicide Detail at 553-1145.

I have repeatedly said that you, the residents of the Richmond District, are unique, and the death of Mr. DeJesus only reinforces that belief. Members of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association have established a \$1,000 reward fund for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the responsible individuals. It is that spirit of community that make the Richmond the safest place in the City to live.

There has been much said, both praise and criticism, of the mayor's recent program to improve the safety on Muni buses. The range of discussion has been that "the cops have better things to do than ride buses for a few blocks" to "a feeling of security" by passengers. I can report to you that the presence of police officers on Muni buses has resulted in a reduction of reported incidents and that the program is successful. The program has also reaped additional benefits.

Shortly after midnight on April 14, a man and woman were abducted in a carjacking in the Diamond Heights area of the City.

Several hours later, Officers Jerome Grady and Michelle Kern boarded a bus as part of the normal duties and observed two subjects get on a few blocks later who fit the description of the wanted individuals. Your officers took the two individuals into custody, determined that they were in fact the perpetrators of the crime. Property belonging to the victims, as well as the gun used, were recovered.

Finally, as I was completing this article, I was handed a report of an incident that occurred at Ocean Beach. Shortly after 9 p.m., someone reported that there was a person on Ocean Beach firing a gun. Officers went to the area and were directed to a residence on the 700 block of 47th Avenue. During the course of the investigation and the identification of the individuals involved, the weapons were recovered and the officers discovered that the suspects were growing large quantities of marijuana. In addition to removing two individuals who had no respect for the safety of others, a major supplier of marijuana was apprehended.

Our next community meeting will be held on May 21 at 7 p.m. in the community room behind Richmond Station. Hope to see all of you there.

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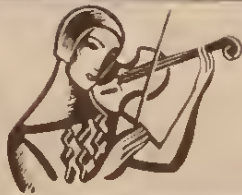
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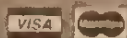
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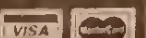
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Poets in the schools



Photo: Philip Liborio Gangi

Students from the Lafayette Elementary School participated in the California Poets in the School Program and read their creations during a special event held April 21 at the Clean Well Lighted Place for Books on Van Ness Avenue. From right to left are Johnny Sung, Richard Canton, Christine Chang, Astrid Benson and Allison Berger.

Hearing for UCSF long-range plan

The Draft Environmental Impact Report on UCSF's Draft 1996 Long Range Development Plan will be the subject of a formal public hearing at 7 p.m. May 20 in the UCSF Laurel Heights Conference Center, 3333 California St.

The Draft LRDP will guide the physical development of the UCSF campuses over the next 15 years. It provides guidelines for

the renovation or replacement of aging and obsolete buildings at the main UCSF Parnassus Heights location and other UCSF sites and for the development of additional space at a new location.

The objective of the LRDP is to provide additional space for laboratories and other academic programs, ease overcrowding at Parnassus Heights and consoli-

date programs currently scattered throughout the City.

For more information about the meeting or to obtain copies of the Draft EIR and the Draft LRDP, call the UCSF Community and Governmental Relations office at 476-3206. Copies of both documents are also available at the UCSF Public Affairs office at 3333 California St., Suite 103.

Lilienthal to hold festival May 18

The Claire Lilienthal Alternative Elementary School will be holding its annual Mayfair carnival on Saturday, May 18.

The event, titled "Mayfair '96 — Our Changing World," will

feature games, booths, prizes, food and live entertainment.

It will be the first public event to be held at the school's new site in the Marina District, at 3630 Divisadero St.

Admission is \$1.50 for adults

and 50 cents for children, and the public is invited.

The Saturday event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information, contact Bill Sauro at 928-1686.

Asian Heritage Month events slated

In honor of Asian Heritage Month, the UCSF Asian Pacific Celebration Committee will present film screenings, a talk and two cultural celebrations.

Steven Okazaki's film "American Sons," which examines how racism shapes the lives of Asian-American men, will be shown at noon and 5:30 p.m. May 14 in Toland Hall, 533

Parnassus Ave.

William Tamayo, regional attorney of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, will talk about the future employment challenges for under-represented groups at noon, May 15 in the Health Sciences West Building, Room 300, 513 Parnassus Ave.

The Asian Pacific Cultural

Festival, featuring arts and crafts, food and entertainment, will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. May 16 at Saunders Court, 521 Parnassus Ave. The Pilipino Cultural Celebration, including food and entertainment, happens May 17 at the same time and location.

All events are free. For more information, call 476-2675.

Music teacher hits the right notes

The instrumental music teacher at the Alamo and Frank McCoppin elementary schools in the Richmond District recently won an award for excellence in teaching from the Mason-McDuffie Education Foundation.

Cynthia Carlin, selected from hundreds of applicants, teaches more than a thousand students a week for San Francisco public schools, including Jefferson Elementary and Lawton Alternative.

Her classes include lessons in flute, clarinet, trumpet, violin and chorus.

The staff and students at Alamo and McCoppin expressed thanks to her for her contributions to music education.

Blotter

Continued from page 4

pockets. On the car's front passenger seat were two cellular phones.

Officers also found that the car's right interior door panel had a hidden compartment in which were stashed \$3,650 cash, a digital scale and a 9mm assault weapon with a loaded magazine. Also inside the compartment were bags of a white powder sub-

stance and a hard rock substance.

In the hidden compartment in the car's left interior door panel were empty plastic bags and another loaded 9mm magazine.

The suspect said he bought the suspected narcotics for \$8,700 earlier that evening, while he bought the weapon in September for \$600. Police booked the suspect.

Threats Against Life, April 5, 9 a.m., John F. Kennedy and Chain of Lakes Drives

The victim, a gardener, found

an illegal campsite in Golden Gate Park about a week before April 5 and evicted the unknown suspect, the camper. The suspect returned to set up another illegal campsite, which the victim found April 5.

When victim again told the suspect to break camp, the suspect became enraged and yelled threats. The victim feared the suspect would return to erect another illegal campsite and attack him while he worked. Police searched for the suspect to no avail.

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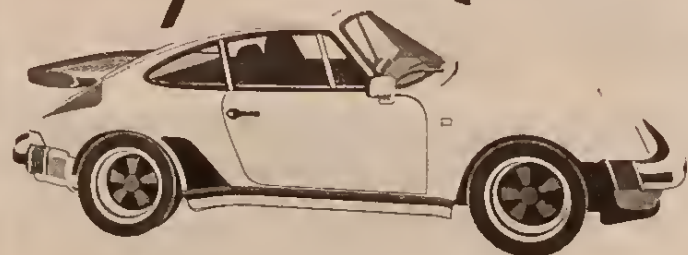
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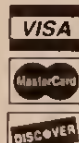
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District Attorney's office wants to know concerns of neighborhood

by Valerie May

About 35 people attending the Richmond District Community/Police Forum Tuesday, April 16, got a chance to hear Richmond resident Chief Assistant District Attorney Marla Miller describe recent changes in the district attorney's office and tell her about their own concerns.

Since Terrence Hallinan took office as district attorney in January, the office has hired 14 new assistant district attorneys, is reorganizing to cut a few top-level jobs and announced its new three-strikes policy, Miller said.

The new district attorney's office is applying this policy the way voters intended for it to be applied, she said: toward violent crimes.

"Our focus in the office is violent crimes," Miller said. If the felony committed is a violent or serious one—as defined by statute—as opposed to something that "is not serious, like stealing a pizza," she said, "we will generally apply the three-strikes law.

"We believe we are well within the law," she said of this interpretation of the controversial three-strikes law, "and we are consistent with other Bay Area DA's offices," she added.

Another goal for the office, Miller said, is having deputy district attorneys who are attuned to the issues in the neighborhoods and who will be a resource for getting people involved in crime prevention and education. One way to accomplish that, she said, is to encourage deputy district attorneys to live in the City. The district attorney's office is just now beginning that process, she said, and will be taking a neighborhood or two—probably Hunters Point and Oceanview/Merced/Ingleside—as test cases.

Miller appealed to the neighborhood residents to get involved

in the process, to serve on juries and be witnesses to crimes.

"We need the help of citizens like you. We can't prosecute if we don't have witnesses," she said.

The district attorney's office, Miller said, is "quite victim/witness-friendly;" the office's witness protection programs include help with filing claims for restitution of money, making counselling available and a family violence program, she added.

Some concerns Miller mentioned about the Richmond District were:

- Auto burglary: "If you hear a car alarm at night," she said, "look out the window, get involved."

- Gangs: There is a gang task force in the police department, and one in the district attorney's office. These cases, said Miller, are "real tough cases to crack because people are afraid to come forward—but we have ways of assisting those witnesses."

- Domestic violence: The district attorney's office has five people dedicated solely to prosecuting these cases, she said, "so people don't have to go from attorney to attorney."

The team handles domestic violence cases from beginning to end, so each case gets prosecuted "vertically," she said, which provides continuity for the victim.

"We just started a new program for misdemeanor domestic violence cases," she added.

Concerns some of the residents raised included the abuse and robbery of elderly people.

"Do the police really want the average person to get involved?" asked one woman. "It seems like they don't welcome it."

Miller encouraged victims and witnesses to make a police report and give descriptions. "Those are really tough cases," she said, adding it is easier to prosecute if there is a pattern.

Officer Jill Connolly added, "It's our job; we want you to call. We need to establish patterns."

Miller added, "We are working with the police department in the fraud bureau" to speed up the prosecution of these cases, because of the ages of the victims.

Miller invited anyone who has a friend they suspect of being abused to call her office.

"If anyone suspects that that's going on they shouldn't sit by," she said.

Officers Glenn Sylvester and Patricia Jackson also spoke, touching on such issues as a "new crime wave" in the Richmond District: theft of copper wire from construction sites.

Jackson encouraged residents to call the police department if they see a truck drive up to a construction site at night.

Gambling behind a local senior center was an abated situation, Jackson also said.

Other issues that were brought up by residents included a rat colony living behind the Star of the Sea Church at 4420 Geary Blvd.

NERT Classes

The meeting's host, Tom Fields of the Planning Association for the Richmond, announced upcoming Neighborhood Emergency Response Training (NERT) classes.

The classes, which are free, teach hands-on skills of the type most commonly applied after a disaster, according to NERT coordinator Frank Lucier. The course consists of six meetings: five classes and an organizational meeting.

The next course, which runs for six consecutive Tuesday evenings beginning July 9, will be held in the Outer Richmond District at the Golden Gate Senior Center, 6101 Fulton St. For information, contact Lucier at 558-3456.

Rats abound at Clement St. lot

Continued from page 1

huge rats scurrying through the City's parking lot after dark.

"It's scary," says Rosales. "The City has to do something because we can only look after our own store." She says that in her two years of employment, the rats have never been as much of a problem as they have in the last five months.

The sudden explosion of rats could be the aftermath of what is perceived by some Richmond residents as a slackening of enforcement by police and public works inspectors since the initial fervor of the 1993 "Clean up Clement" shake-up spearheaded by SF Supervisor Barbara Kaufman.

According to Paul von Beroldingen, a co-founder of the Community Police Forum and a member of the board of directors for the Planning Association for the Richmond, many business owners are slipping into their old ways with regard to sanitation, the loading and unloading of produce and outdoor vending.

"There needs to be an escalation of enforcement," says von Beroldingen.

"It's not just a health issue. There's so many violations happening daily along Clement St., and there's so many different agencies responsible for enforcing them. Someone is going to



Photo: Philip Liborio Gangi

After a series of complaints to the City's Department of Public Health, the Department of Parking and Traffic ordered rat traps placed along the parking lot on Eighth Avenue.

have to die of a rat bite in (mayor) Willie Brown's office before the issue receives any attention."

Facing complaints from angry neighbors and the obvious health risks associated with rat infestation, the bureau of environmental health has begun planning a rodent abatement program. So far, Ojo has sent his inspectors around the area to notify businesses of their obligation under

law to control the rodents.

"It's a result of property owners not cleaning up food waste properly," says Ojo. "They need to keep their property clean and seal their dumpsters completely."

Ojo says that he intends to send letters in the first week of May to all of the business owners along Clement street between Arguello Boulevard and 15th Avenue. In the letters he will remind business owners of their legal responsibilities regarding sidewalk vending, rat control, and loading.

In addition, Ojo is planning a series of block-by-block informative meetings with all the property owners along Clement Street to drive home the importance following of the health code. Going on the tour will be food inspectors and representatives from the SF Department of Public Works.

"This will be to generate public awareness," says Ojo.

"First you educate the people, then you enforce. If there are more complaints, the property owner will be issued a notice. Then he will have seven days to take action. If action is not taken the owner will be fined \$60 to \$180. For food places, the food permit could be suspended until the problem is taken care of. If the permit is revoked, the place has to reapply."

Ojo's public meetings are tentatively planned for late May.



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Richmond toy inventor getting worldwide recognition

More than 200,000 AstroJax sold in past 3 years

by Vincent Pearson

How much fun can you have with three balls on a string? More than you might think, according to Richmond resident Larry Shaw, whose spent the last 10 years trying to convince people of just that.

Shaw is the inventor of a popular new toy called AstroJax which has sold more than 200,000 units in the last three years to stores like the Nature Company, Natural Wonders, and Imaginarium. In February, Shaw's toy made its debut in Europe at the Nuremberg Toy Show.

Since then an additional 20,000 units have been sold.

They've also been featured by MTV in their coverage of a similar exhibition in New York.

If you are unfamiliar with AstroJax, the conception is simple: three red foam rubber balls linked together by a nylon string. The balls on the ends don't move, but the middle one shuttles smoothly along its nylon cord.

AstroJax have been likened to a combination lasso, juggling balls, and yo-yo toy. But compared to any of the above, they require almost no skill. They're easy and within minutes almost anyone can play.

With no more than a lazy, bouncing wrist motion, the balls make horizontal and vertical orbits, figure eights, or dizzying

patterns in the air. With a little practice, the advanced user can bounce them off the ceiling and do behind-the-back tricks.

AstroJax are the kind of toy which adults enjoy as much as kids. They're relaxing and addictive, verging on hypnotic.

Visually, the effect is reminiscent of perfectly circling molecules or orbiting moons (for an exceptionally stellar experience, try Shaw's glow-in-the-dark model). If you prefer disorder, a jagged butterfly motion produces a pattern not unlike the mating dance of two flying insects.

"It's basically a fidget toy," says Shaw of his creation. "The basic motions just sort of feel nice. It tugs back on you in a nice way."

Shaw's assessment is modest. It certainly does not reflect the conviction of a man who has invested over 10 years of hard work and thousands of dollars into an object easily disparaged as three balls on a string.

The tale of AstroJax is as epic as the toy seems simple. When Shaw entered graduate school at Cornell for his Ph.D. in physics he was not intending to design toys. He was a theorist and planned to be an academic.

But as Shaw tells it, "I used to go down to the lab and hang out

with my friend, who was an experimentalist in the low-temperature physics lab. And I would sort of fiddle with things while talking. One day I was playing with some dental floss, hex nuts and nylon sleeving and I thought to myself, 'Wow, this should be a toy, but I've never seen it.'"

Shaw appreciated the possibilities of his discovery from the beginning and started to seek out other toys which resembled his crude prototype. Once he was satisfied that there was nothing similar on the market, Shaw decided to get a patent.

He consulted patent attorneys in Ithaca and at Cornell. When he learned how much it cost to have someone else do it, Shaw wrote one himself.

When he showed his completed patent to Binghamton attorneys Salzman and Levy, they were so impressed with his work that they offered him a job. Shaw's patent issued in 1989 and he's been writing patents on the side ever since.

Meanwhile, between the patent writing and the legal wrangling, not to mention the other work required for a Ph.D., Shaw was developing his toy.

"I spent a great deal of time attempting to optimize the toy. It looks very simple; its just three balls on a string. But it turns out that things that look simple can actually be pretty difficult to

solve mathematically."

All in all, it took about a year and a half, and hundreds of prototypes before Shaw decided on a model.

"First they were made out of wood. Then plastic balls. An ellipsoid would be the optimum shape. But then there's assembly issues. I've got pages and pages of figures. And I'm still improving it to keep costs down."

Shaw began to promote AstroJax in 1989. But as it turned out, licensing the toy was an odyssey in itself.

"It's really hard to do something new. I learned the hard way. I was negotiating with big toy companies, like Tonka, and Ohio Art ... Whammo was sort of interested. But just to get someone to do something new is very hard. The people at Koosh (the makers of Koosh Ball, a fluffy knotted ball made of colored rub-

Continued on page 9



Photo: Philip Liborio Gangi

Larry Shaw got the idea for AstroJax while playing in a friend's physics lab. It took him seven years to get the product on the market.

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As a teen, I moved to the Bay Area to attend college. Although my segregated primary education failed to prepare me for higher learning, those formative early employment experiences did. I understood achievement and, after meeting the right mentor, went on to succeed at San Francisco State and Hastings School of Law.

I had other summer and year-round jobs along the way. And though many doors were closed to educated young black men during the '50s and '60s, as my education advanced, the opportunities expanded. I carried away important life lessons from each new employment opportunity.

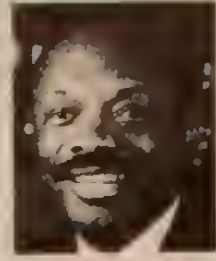
Jobs are a key part of any kid's education, but are especially important for low-income youth who often lack the professional links into full-time, professional employment.

Often these youths come from single-family homes, which fully or in part rely on public assistance. These youths are expected to contribute to the family income.

Each year the city of San Francisco receives approximately \$3.3 million from the federal government to implement the Summer Youth Employment and

Give youth a break this summer

Mayor Willie Brown



Training Program (SYETP). This program provides jobs for more than 2,800 youth in San Francisco. SYETP targets youth ages 14 to 21 from low-income families. Many of these young people do not have role models who work. Many also lack the experience and skills necessary to get a job of their own.

Through SYETP, these youth gain experience that gives them the structure and support they need in order to succeed at their first employment experience. Local community-based organizations and the San Francisco Unified School District recruit and place these kids in non-profit organizations and public sector agencies throughout the City to perform entry-level jobs such as clerical assistants and library aides.

One example is 17-year-old Asanti from Bayview Hunters Point. A senior at Burton High School, Asanti currently works part-time at the Young Community Developers, a program that serves youth in her neighborhood. Asanti has worked as a child care assistant and teacher's aide, assisting with the care of children with disabilities. Through her experience, she has gained a new appreciation of her own skills and is contributing to her neighborhood at the same time.

Unfortunately, future experiences for youth like Asanti are in

danger. Congress has slashed funding for the SYETP program by more than 25 percent, resulting in a loss of 700 job opportunities for low-income youth.

Therefore, it's time for San Francisco to step up to the plate.

Working with Supervisor Michael Yaki and local business leaders, I have launched "Say YES (Youth Employment for the Summer)," a campaign to raise money and jobs to save the summer youth employment program.

Our goal is to raise \$600,000 in money and jobs to employ 700 youth. We need to raise the money by the close of the school year in mid-June. So far, area businesses have stepped up to the plate.

Businesses contributing so far include: Charles Schwab & Co., the Small Business Network, Just Desserts, Nestle, Gannett and the San Francisco Giants and 49ers, to name a few.

You can join the campaign by contributing to the Say YES or by offering employment for a young person. By contributing, you will be providing many youths with their first experience in the world of work. Like the tips I earned shining shoes, the tips these kids learn will never be wasted, because they come in the form of life-enriching employment experience.

Contribute to the Say YES campaign by calling 861-JOBS or mailing checks to the Say YES, c/o the Private Industry Council, 745 Franklin St., Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94102-3117.

Traffic, 50 overflows at Baker Beach

Continued from page 1

districts.

A plan for rerouting traffic during construction is still in the works.

"But the plan for lights was opposed by residents who feared more traffic would be diverted" through the heart of the Richmond District, Olea said.

"The thought was it would turn quiet residential streets into major streets."

Olea said opponents sent letters to officials, prompting his department to drop the plans in mid-April, before researching their benefits or meeting with neighbors as is usually done.

Woo told the Richmond group that when Central Freeway construction does begin, "We don't know where traffic will go." He said, however, "traffic, like water, goes wherever there's the least resistance."

DPT has tentative plans to add a lane to the South Van Ness on-ramp, divert southbound Howard Street traffic and create other detours.

Oak Street traffic that now enters the freeway at Oak and Laguna streets will be diverted to the South Van Ness ramp, likely causing some traffic congestion, Olea said.

On March 18 SF Mayor Willie Brown wrote to Caltrans renouncing an earlier agreement he had with Caltrans to demolish the upper-level Oak Street on-ramp and to keep, retrofit and widen the Central Freeway's lower level for two-way traffic.

But Caltrans has not replied, DPT Project Manager Jerry Robbins said.

"There may be some differ-

ence of opinion between their Oakland and Sacramento offices," he said.

Ephraim Hirsch, a structural engineer who serves as chairman of the Citizen Advisory Task Force for the Central Freeway, said after three year's study his committee recommends demolishing both ramp levels and replacing them with an underground tunnel.

The current Caltrans plan is "an unsuitable and undesirable monstrosity," Hirsch said.

The SF Board of Supervisors endorsed the task force plan in October, so Brown's shift in direction aligned him with the supervisors.

The task force calls for a new freeway to either touch down at Market Street before tunneling under Haight and Page streets and exiting at Fell and Oak streets or to continue over Market Street before dipping beneath Haight and Page streets. Using Wilbur Smith Associates, the task force estimated replacement would cost \$80 million, only \$10 million more than what Caltrans estimated for a retrofit, Olea said.

"If Caltrans is permitted to retrofit and widen the lower level structure, it will view this as a permanent fix ... and maintain it is not necessary ... to do anything further," Hirsch says.

Once Caltrans and the city do agree on removal of the unsafe parts of the freeway damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, DPT says drivers will get off the freeway earlier at the Mission and Otis street exit or the Duboce Avenue off-ramp, Olea said.

Overflows at Baker Beach

Planning Association for the Richmond members also heard about the city's waste- and storm-water treatment program.

Marine biologist Arleen Navarret of the SF Bureau of Water Pollution Control's Oceanside Plant said storm runoff overflowed 50 times at Baker Beach last year, something the Richmond Transport Project now being built should reduce to two or three by next year.

Because of storm caused overflows along Baker Beach and China Beach, Navarret said the city posts alerts hoping to keep people out of the water.

Asked if the department does research on the effects of discharges on surfers and swimmers, she said it does not because it is hard to isolate the problem.

"Saline water alone can cause dysentery, so it's difficult to tell the cause," of some effects, she said.

There's also a toxic red tide from minute marine-life activity and pollution from other Bay Area communities that discharge untreated waste and storm water into the Bay and Pacific Ocean, she said.

Oceanside Plant staff sample beach areas three times a week for coliform bacteria.

But most west-side effluent is treated and piped some 4.5 miles offshore to an 80-foot deep outlet called the Southwest Ocean Outfall. There it disperses into the "dynamic" tides of the Pacific Ocean.

Plant staff also regularly troll and monitor harm from these discharges to marine life, among which are the Dungeness crab and sole, prized by area diners.

With the press reporting real estate sales up the first quarter of this year, I have received many inquiries recently on how the market has been doing, where the interest rates are headed, and whether this is the time to buy or sell real estate. I have reproduced some of the most frequently asked questions and my answers to these questions.



Real Estate Q & A

John M. Lee

Q: I read that the real estate market has been up lately. Do you see this trend continuing?

A: This has been an interesting year so far for real estate. The market did very well in January and February because interest rates were low. But the Federal Reserve Bank started to raise rates because of inflationary fears and that has put a halt to the market. The press is reporting on the total number of sales that have actually closed, and all the numbers look good.

However, keep in mind that what they are reporting are actually sales which occurred in the first two months of this year and are now closing. I am tracking actual sales and have seen a decrease the past two months because of the increase in interest rates.

Q: How will the market do the rest of the year?

A: I think we have turned the corner and all factors are in place for an economic recovery.

All of the stock indices have attained all-time highs, interest rates have risen but by historical standards are still fairly low, and all of the high-tech companies in the area are reporting good earnings.

When consumers have made money in the stock market to aid in their down payment, when they feel confident about their jobs and they realize the interest rate is pretty good, they will look into buying a home or trading up to a bigger home.

Thus, I see the rest of the year in real estate as a transition period, with prices heading upward. All of the signs are there for a sustained recovery.

We have been in a real estate slump since June 1989 and this has been one of the longest down cycles in San Francisco real estate history. Since San Francisco is basically built out and has little land to expand, prices will have to increase eventually due to the laws of supply and demand. We have a fixed supply and continual demand for real estate in the

City, leading to consistent price increases in the long term.

Q: Is this a good time to sell real estate?

A: That depends on your personal situation. Sure, prices have decreased in the last six years. But if you are thinking about trading up, this is probably a good time to do it because chances are the larger home you want has much more value than your home.

The closing costs and your financial obligations are less because property taxes, mortgage payments, insurance, transfer tax, commission, title insurance and escrow fees are all tied to the selling price. So this is actually the ideal time to trade up.

If you are thinking about cashing out and do not have a need to sell, it might be more advantageous for you to wait for a few years. I would advise that you consult a professional Realtor and a certified public accountant to determine your best course of action.

Q: Where do you see the interest rates going? Should I refinance now or wait for the next opportunity?

A: The current interest rate is about 8.25 percent for a 30-year fixed rate loan, up about 1.5 percent from two months ago. For people holding an adjustable rate loan and expecting to stay in their home for a long time, this might be the time to refinance into a fixed rate loan. I believe that the interest rates will rise somewhat this year as inflation increases.

Inflation is calculated by combining prices of certain consumer goods. As I look around, I see prices going up, especially gasoline. Every inflationary period in recent decades was preceded by increasing oil prices. As the Third World countries gear up in manufacturing and the oil-producing countries limit oil production, simple economics indicate that oil prices have to increase.

The good news is that if inflation comes back, hard assets such as real estate should increase, making this a good time to buy because of lower prices and lower interest rates.

Richmond toy inventor

Continued from page 7

ber bands) said it didn't do enough things. I thought that was the most ironic thing for the people at Koosh to say."

At the end of his licensing campaign, the consensus seemed to be that a toy which retailed for \$5.95 was simply not worth the expense of T.V. advertising.

So Shaw formed a partnership with childhood buddy and fellow inventor, Sausalito resident Louis Pearl.

In the last three years Shaw has found a niche in more educationally oriented, hands-on retail stores. The Nature Company had a one year exclusive on AstroJax and the toy sold well. AstroJax is currently carried by Natural Wonders, Imaginarium, and the

Discovery Channel Stores. The toy began to generate profits, finally, last year.

"When it was just hex nuts on a string, some people sort of laughed," says Shaw. "But now that it sells, everybody is really supportive. It's fun. It's a nice way to make a living, but my true love is music. That's the whole reason I started doing this."

Well, if you thought the name sounded familiar, you were probably right. Larry Shaw moonlights as a musician whose self-titled debut album has received critical reviews and gotten air play nation wide.

AstroJax can be found at the Toy Boat at Clement Street at Fifth Avenue, where Shaw will be doing a demonstration on May 11 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Q: I would like to transfer properties to my children; however, I am afraid that their property taxes will go up too much. What can I do about it?

A: A relatively unknown property tax break is Proposition 58 — the exemption from reassessment for transfers between parent and child. Parents can transfer properties to their children and have their children keep the same property tax basis, usually much lower than if they purchased similar properties.

This exemption applies to principal residences and up to \$1 million of "full cash value" per transfer of all other real property. "Full cash value" in this case means the value on the tax assessment roll prior to the transfer, typically much lower than the fair market value.

This allows husband and wife to transfer up to \$2 million of real estate to their children and still be able to exclude them from reassessment.

John M. Lee is a top-selling real estate broker for Prudential Coliformio Realty. If you have any questions regarding real estate, call him at 682-6640.

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Public Service Announcement

The UCSF School of Nursing is looking for women between the ages of 40 and 45 to participate in a study of midlife women's health. African-American, Mexican-American and Caucasian-American women are invited to join. Compensation is provided for volunteers. The study involves telephone interviews and home visits. To get more information and see if you qualify, call (415) 476-4435.

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May Calendar of Events

1-5

Washington Reunion: The George Washington High School Class of 1946 is taking reservations for its 50th class reunion. June 8, 6 p.m.-midnight, SF Airport Hilton, Terrace Ballroom. \$60. Register at 586-4578.

Main Attractions: The SF Main Library opened with exhibits on its construction, book arts and late "Beach Blanket Babylon" creator Steve Silver. Through June 9, Civic Center. Free. 557-4595.

Chinese Art: The exhibit "Living Masters: Recent Paintings by C.C. Wang" showcases the later works of a 90-year-old Chinese artist who combines bold abstraction with calligraphy. Through July 7, Asian Art Museum. 379-8801.

Summer Soccer: The non-profit SF Vikings Soccer Club is registering kids ages 5-16 for week-long summer sessions in recreational and competitive play. Sessions start Mondays July 29-Aug. 19, 9 a.m., Golden Gate Park's Beach Chalet Soccer Field. \$130, \$150 per session. Call 753-3111 for an application.

Japanese Crafts: The exhibit "Mingei: Two Centuries of Japanese Folk Art" celebrates the "people's art" in pre-industrial Japan with 140 treasures from the Folk Craft Museum in Tokyo. Through Aug. 11, Asian Art Museum. 751-2500.

Senior Dance Classes: The Golden Gate Park Senior Center, run by the SF Recreation and Park Department, teaches seniors Latin and ballroom dance 10-11:30 a.m. Thursdays and international folk dance 3-4:30 p.m. Saturdays. 6101 Fulton St. \$1, \$1.50. 666-7015.

Plant Sales: The Strybing Arboretum Society sells volunteer-propagated plants seldom found in commercial nurseries or gardens. Members-only preview sale May 3, 5-8 p.m.; public sale May 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. Free. 661-1316.

Hellenistic Art: "Pergamon: The Telephos Frieze From the Great Altar" is an exhibit of friezes, sculpture and coins from an ancient kingdom in Turkey. May 4-Sept. 8, California Palace of the Legion of Honor. 863-3330.

Garage Sale: Parents of boys in the Sea Explorers program in Aquatic Park sell their furniture, hardware, plants and household items to raise money. May 4, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., 1299 Eighth Ave. 658-4136.

Rummage Sale: People sell wares to raise money for Star of the Sea Grammar School; sale space is available for \$10 and \$25. May 4, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., school parking lot, 360 Ninth Ave. Free. Call 387-5155 for more information.

Art and Ecology: A workshop in the Presidio examines the value of combining the science of habitat restoration with art and creative writing. May 4, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. Call 668-9765 for reservations and location.

Composting: The SF League of Urban Gardeners gives hands-on workshops on indoor and outdoor composting. May 4 and 11, 10 a.m.-noon, and May 5, 2-4 p.m. Garden for the Environment, Lawton Street and Seventh Avenue. Free. Register at 285-7585.



Courtesy photo

A rare white alligator will visit the San Francisco Zoo from May 24 through Sept. 2, one of only 18 known in the world. "Antoine LeBlanc," on loan from the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, was discovered by fishermen in the Louisiana swamp-lands in 1987. For more information, call 753-7080.

Russian Dance: Neva Russian Dance Ensemble performs "Dances of the Russian Soul," featuring character/folk dances of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Romania. May 4, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and May 5, 2 p.m. Russian Center, 2450 Sutter St. \$6-15. Reserve at 563-7362.

Presidio Hike: The Greenbelt Alliance, a land conservation group, leads a 5.5-mile, moderate hike to explore the Presidio's history and landscape. May 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., meet in front of the Presidio Terrace at Arguello Boulevard and Washington Street. Free. Register at 255-3233.

Animal Tales: In this month's Storytime installment at the Helen Crocker-Russell Library, critters ages 4-8 hear about furrier critters. May 5 and 19, 10:30 a.m., Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. Free. 661-1514.

6-12

Family Sing-Along: Anza Branch Library invites people of all ages to join Ginger Nomura in a chorus. May 7, 10:30 a.m., 550 37th Ave. Free. 666-7160.

Cancer Therapy: The UCSF/Mount Zion Cancer Center holds exercise classes for cancer patients. May 7 and 21, 12:30-1:30 p.m., 2356 Sutter St., second floor. Free. Register at 885-3693.

Children's Art: The annual Youth Arts Festival is a showcase of visual and performing arts by San Francisco students from kindergarten to 12th grade. May 8-12 (Family Day is May 11), M.H. de Young Memorial Museum and Golden Gate Park Music Concourse. 750-3640.

Senior Prom: The SF Recreation and Park Department and CIGNA Healthcare for Seniors invite the young at heart to this annual gathering with dancing, prizes and "surprises." May 8, 12:30-3:30 p.m., SF County Fair Building. Free. 666-7205.

HIV Treatment: Project Inform gives an update on the action, interaction and effects of protease inhibitors and combination therapy. May 9, 6:30-9 p.m., UCSF Laurel Heights Conference Center, 3333 California St. Free. 558-8669.

Multiculturalism: The last installment of USF's spring lecture series on U.S. identity is given by Gloria Anzaldua, a Chicana-Tejana writer who has worked for migrant farm workers' rights. May 9, 7 p.m., USF

McLaren Center, 2130 Fulton St. Free. 666-6147.

Healthy Aging: Program attendees learn how aging occurs and how to maintain longevity through inexpensive exercises and proper eating habits. May 11, 9 a.m.-noon, UCSF Laurel Heights Conference Center, 3333 California St. Free. Register at 750-5342.

Fall Soccer: The SF Vikings Soccer Club registers children ages 5-17 for recreational and competitive play Saturdays during the fall season; bring birth certificate. May 11, 9:30 a.m., Jewish Community Center, 3200 California St. \$60, \$37.50 for those under age 6; financial aid available. 753-3111.

Unique Antiques: A scholarship-raising sale at the Hamlin School, for girls in kindergarten through eighth grade, features Bay Area antique dealers as well as treasures from home. May 11, 2120 Broadway. Preview (9-10 a.m.) \$10, regular admission (10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.) \$3. 922-3964.

Choosing Schools: Steve Rees gives a seminar on how parents can choose a San Francisco public school for their children. May 11, 3 p.m., Richmond Branch Library, 351 Ninth Ave. Free. 666-7021.

Roses for Mom: The SF Rose Society's annual Mother's Day Rose Show has lectures on growing, arrangement demonstrations and free blooms for the

Continued on page 11

The Richmond Review

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The Richmond Review
welcomes all written articles,
news tips, feature story ideas
and photographs from
neighborhood contributors.

Calendar of events

Continued from page 10

first 300 mothers attending. May 12, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Ghirardelli Square, 900 North Point St. Free. 436-0497.

Chamber Concerts: The Midsummer Mozart Festival presents the Seraglio Chamber Series, featuring pieces by various classical composers. May 12, 19 and 26, 2 p.m., California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Florence Gould Theater. \$18. Tickets available by contacting City Box Office, 153 Kearny St., at 392-4400.

13-19

More Composting: At the next monthly meeting of the American Fuchsia Society, Madalyn Drago talks about composting and organic gardening. May 13, 8 p.m., SF County Fair Building. Free. 566-4797.

Film Fest: The 4 Star Theatre and Tai Seng Video Marketing Inc. present screenings of 32 classic and current Hong Kong films during an eight-week-long festival. May 14-July 4, 2200 Clement St. \$4.50-6. 666-3488.

Spring Storytelling: Sherrie Dobrott welcomes spring with stories and songs for ages 3-5. May 14, 10:15 a.m., Richmond Branch Library, 351 Ninth Ave. Free. 666-7021.

Vision Talks: A seminar series on radial keratotomy and other ways to correct eyesight is held the first and third Tuesday of each month. May 14 and 28, 7-8 p.m., St. Mary's Medical Center, Eye Center Conference Room, 450 Stanyan St., fifth floor. Free. 392-1392.

Furniture Talk: The American Decorative Arts Forum has Margretta M. Lovell, UC Berkeley, talk about the making and marketing of furniture in 18th century Newport. May 14, 8 p.m., M.H. de Young Memorial Museum. \$5, \$7. 499-0701.

Speak Freely: Work on those public communication skills at Lands End Toastmaster meetings, the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. May 15 and 29, 5 p.m., Veterans Affairs Building 200, first floor, Room A 122 conference room, 42nd Avenue and Clement Street. 221-4208.

School Fair: Argonne Alternative Elementary School's Mayfair is a fund-raiser with games, booths and international foods. May 18, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 3950 Sacramento St. Free. 750-8460.

Lung Health Fair: UCSF experts discuss lung problems and new treatments, while local groups sponsor information booths and health exams. May 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., UCSF/Mount Zion Medical Center, Healing Garden, 2356 Sutter St. 885-3882 or 994-LUNG.

Religion Speakers: As part of a month long celebration of Jerusalem 3000, theologians and professors discuss sanctity and strife for Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Holy City. May 19, 1-5 p.m., USF McLaren Center, 2130 Fulton St. \$7-12. Register at 957-1551.

20-26

UCSF Hearing: The public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for UCSF's building development plans. May 20, 7 p.m., UCSF Laurel Heights auditorium, 3333 California St. Free. 476-3206.

Computer Talks: The next SF Personal Computer Users Group gathering addresses Intuit's on-line banking as well as Canyon Software's applications. May 21, 7:30 p.m., UCSF Laurel Heights, 3333 California St. \$4. 572-1100 or 777-1332.

Better Stargazing: Dr. Tim Hunter, co-founder of the non-profit International Dark-Sky Association, talks about reduc-

ing urban light pollution in an attempt to improve star viewing. May 21, 7:30 p.m., California Academy of Sciences, Morrison Planetarium. \$3. 750-7127 or 750-7111.

Song and Dance: Families sing and move to Dan Goldensohn's original songs. May 22, 7:15 p.m., Anza Branch Library, 550 37th Ave. Free. 666-7160.

Mountain Fever: Dr. George Clark, state president of the California Native Plant Society, shows slides of Sierra Nevada vistas and flowers. May 22, 7:30 p.m., SF County Fair Building, Old Library. Free. 752-2718 or 282-5066.

Garage Sale: Helpers of the Mentally Retarded raise money for their residential care and activity programs by selling records, books, furniture and crafts. May 23-26, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., 2626 Fulton St. 387-3031.

Faberge Exhibit: The traveling exhibit "Faberge in America" has more than 400 objects by Russian jeweler Peter Carl Faberge, including 15 Easter eggs commissioned by czars. May 25-July 28, M.H. de Young Memorial Museum. \$3.50 surcharge. 863-3330.

Pfaying the Blues: Doc Bunning performs blues and jazz at the Grapeleaf Restaurant. May 25 and June 29, 8:30 p.m., 4031 Balboa St. \$5. 668-1515.

27-June 1

Richmond Republicans: The Richmond District Republican Club conducts regular business, with open forum discussion and a guest speaker on a topic to be determined. May 30, 6:30 p.m., Richmond Station community room, 461 Sixth Ave. Free. 386-2573.


Violet Show: Bloomburst '96 is the African Violet Society of SF's annual show with sales, displays and demonstrations. June 1, 10 a.m., SF County Fair Building. Free. Call 751-6037 for more information.

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